REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified	1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY	3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE	
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)	5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION Naval Postgraduate School 6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (*If applicable*) 36	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION Naval Postgraduate School
6c. ADDRESS (*City, State, and ZIP Code*) Monterey, CA 93943-5000	7b. ADDRESS (*City, State, and ZIP Code*) Monterey, CA 93943-5000
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION 8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (*If applicable*)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
8c. ADDRESS (*City, State, and ZIP Code*)	10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS Program Element No / Project No / Task No / Work Unit Accession Number

11. TITLE (*Include Security Classification*)
INCENTIVES FOR RECRUITERS

12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Mark L. Skidmore

13a. TYPE OF REPORT	13b. TIME COVERED	14. DATE OF REPORT (*year, month, day*)	15. PAGE COUNT
Master's Thesis	From To	September 1992	60

16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION
The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.

17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (*continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number*)
FIELD	GROUP	SUBGROUP	Incentives, Recruiters, Recruiting

19. ABSTRACT (*continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number*)

The purpose of this thesis is to study the different types of incentives for recruiters that are used in the private sector of the U.S. economy and in the U.S. Navy, and to examine how, if possible, incentives that are used for civilian recruiters can be applied to the Navy.

20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT ☒ UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED ☐ SAME AS REPORT ☐ DTIC USERS	21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL David R. Henderson	22b. TELEPHONE (*Include Area code*) (408) 646-2524 22c. OFFICE SYMBOL AS/Ht

T258626

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Incentives for Recruiters

by

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Lieutenant, United States Navy
B.S., United States Naval Academy

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
September 1992

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to study the different types of incentives for recruiters that are used in the private sector of the U. S. economy and in the U.S. Navy, and to examine how, if possible, incentives that are used for civilian recruiters can be applied to the Navy.

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I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this thesis is to study the different types of incentives for recruiters that are used in the private sector of the U.S. economy and in the U.S. Navy, and to examine how, if possible, incentives that are used for civilian recruiters can be applied to the Navy.

A. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Navy has a unique labor market in that it "grows its own labor force." That is, the Navy promotes its people from within. In the enlisted corps, all enlistees start "at the bottom and work their way up." The officer corps is basically the same. The Navy rarely recruits people to mid-junior grade levels except in some specialized communities, such as the Nurse and Doctor corps.

In times of drawdown and shrinking budgets, one may ask, "why do we need recruiters?" Recruiters are needed for two basic reasons. First, as previously mentioned, the Navy grows its own. Just because of drawdown conditions or even a sluggish economy, the Navy still needs recruiters to attract quality people for the Naval Service. Second, the recruiting process acts as the screening mechanism to ensure that quality recruits enter the Naval Service. So whether the economy is

good or bad, whether there is drawdown or growth, the Navy will always need recruiters.

The U.S. Navy has approximately 500,000 service members. Managing and maintaining its force is an awesome management challenge. In order to recruit the most effective and eligible people, Navy personnel planners and decision-makers rely on their recruiters to attract and select the most potentially qualified personnel. Not only is the Navy concerned with incentives for recruits, but also the Navy is concerned with incentives for its recruiters. "The management challenge is to employ these recruiters as efficiently as possible." [Ref. 1:p. 7]

B. AN OUTLINE OF THE RECRUITING PROCESS

The recruiting process can be thought of in three dimensions: the market for recruits, the recruiters, and the recruiting areas and districts.

1. The Market for Recruits

The first dimension is the market for recruits. In order to determine the mental group category of each recruit, the Navy uses the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) percentile score.

> Upper-mental-group (UMG) recruits score at or above the 50th percentile on the AFQT [and are divided into MG1 (percentiles 93 to 99), MG2 (percentiles 65 to 92), and MG3 [upper (U) or A] (percentiles 50 to 64)]. Lower-mental-group (LMG) recruits score below the 50th percentile and are divided into MG3 [lower (L) or B]

(percentiles 31 to 49) and MG4 (percentiles 10 to 30). MG5 (percentiles 1 to 9) individuals are not recruited. [Ref.1:p. 5]

Recruits are further classified as either High School Diploma Graduates (HSDG) or Non High School Diploma Graduates/General Equivalency Diplomas (NHSDG/GED). Table I illustrates the matrix of recruit quality.

Table I. MATRIX OF RECRUIT QUALITY BY MENTAL CATEGORY.

Percentile	Mental Category
93 to 99	1
65 to 92	2
50 to 64	3 Upper (U) or A
31 to 49	3 Lower (L) or B
10 to 30	4
0 to 9	5

Source: CNA Research Memorandum 86-269.

Crossing mental groups one through four (group five, is not recruited) with HSDG status defines six recruit quality categories. These are the categories used by Navy manpower planners and are illustrated in Table II.

2. The Recruiters

The second dimension of Navy recruiting is recruiters. Navy enlisted recruiters can be categorized into three broad functions: production recruiters whose main task is to enlist new recruits; supervisory recruiters who are primarily

Table II. MATRIX OF RECRUIT QUALITY BY HSDG STATUS.

Mental Category	Education Certificate	
	HSDG	NHSDG/GED
1 - 3A	A - cell	B - cell
3B	CU - cell	DU - cell
4	CL - cell	DL - cell

Source: CNA Research Memorandum 88-27.

concerned with managing the production recruiting force; and a small number of recruiters who do not enlist new recruits but have more specialized duties such as community relations and oversight of the Delayed Entry Program (DEP[1]). [Ref. 1:p. 6]

3. The Areas and Districts

The final dimension is the recruiting areas and districts. There are six recruiting areas which are further subdivided into 41 recruiting districts. These are summarized in Table III.

With these three dimensions in place, the management challenge, then, is to employ the recruiters as efficiently as possible across the six areas and 41 districts to recruit the highest quality recruit at the lowest possible cost. Because

[1]The Delayed Entry Program (DEP) allows a person to sign an enlistment contract up to one year in advance of actually entering the Navy and beginning active duty.

Table III. RECRUITING AREAS, DISTRICTS, AND LOCATIONS.

Area	District	Location
1	101	Albany
	102	Boston
	103	Buffalo
	104	New York
	119	Philadelphia
	101	Iselin (NJ)
3 (Southeast)	310	Montgomery
	311	Columbia
	312	Jacksonville
	313	Atlanta
	310	Nashville
	315	Raleigh
	316	Richmond
	348	Miami
4 (North Central)	406	Harrisburg
	406	Washington
	417	Cleveland
	418	Columbus
	422	Pittsburgh
	422	Detroit
5 (Midwest)	521	Chicago
	524	St. Louis
	526	Louisville
	527	Kansas City
	528	Minneapolis
	529	Omaha

	542	Indianapolis
	559	Milwaukee
7 (Southwest)	725	Denver
	730	Albuquerque
	731	Dallas
	732	Houston
	733	Little Rock
	734	New Orleans
	746	San Antonio
	747	Memphis
8 (West)	836	Los Angeles
	837	Portland
	838	San Francisco
	839	Seattle
	840	San Diego

Source: CNA Research Memorandum 88-27.

the number of people recruited and their quality vary substantially with the recruiters' effectiveness, Navy planners offer incentives to their recruiters to encourage individual recruiters to recruit the highest quality recruit possible.

> Providing recruiters with a good system of incentives promotes desirable levels of effort in both good and bad recruiting markets. With such a system, recruiters are encouraged to be as productive as possible, consistent with an acceptable (or optimum) individual level of effort. [Ref. 2:p. 1]

In recent years, several excellent studies of Navy recruiting have been done. In his 1986 study of Individual Incentives in Navy Recruiting, Timothy W. Cooke of the Center

salary. Some contingency recruiters have combination fees. That is, a company will agree to pay a certain percentage of the candidate's first year salary to the contingency recruiter and the company will also agree to pay per-diem plus expenses while the search is being made. [Ref. 13:p. 34]

E. CONCLUSION

The private sector of the U.S. economy is continually faced with the challenge of attracting and maintaining an effective work force. Attracting motivated workers is the main task of the recruiter. Without incentives, a recruiter may recruit someone who, although qualified to perform a particular job, puts forth only a minimum effort; a recruiter operating under an effective incentive plan, on the other hand, may find better workers. Although incentive plans for recruiters may be expensive in the short run, recruiting minimally qualified people may be even more expensive in the long run. Therefore, an incentive plan for recruiters may be more economically sound than none at all.

The next chapter presents results of original research on incentive plans that various firms use.

III. ACTUAL INCENTIVES

As stated earlier in chapter II, the literature on incentives for recruiters is in its infancy -- researchers simply have not discussed this particular area. And just as information regarding incentives for recruiters is scarce, this research has also found that incentive programs for recruiters are scarce.

In order to assess the prevalence of incentive programs for recruiters, the research for this thesis included a written questionnaire (see Appendix B) that polled 105 companies throughout the U.S. on whether they had incentive programs for their recruiters. The questionnaire was sent to the president of each company which was randomly selected from a book titled Jobs '91 [Ref. 14]. This book is broken into chapters governing all professional groups and provides a list of all major companies of all major industries throughout the U.S. Four to seven companies from each industry group listed were selected as representative companies across each particular industry. Companies that were addressed were in the industry groups as listed in Table VI.

Twenty-two companies replied to the questionnaire in a written response. These companies represented conglomerates, banking and financing, soft drink beverages, computers, commercial airlines, cosmetics, oil, power tools, aerospace,

Table VI. MAJOR U.S. INDUSTRY GROUPS.

Advertising	Aerospace
Agriculture	Automotive
Aviation	Banking
Broadcasting	Chemicals
Computers and Electronics	Conglomerates
Consumer Products	Energy
Fashion	Film and Entertainment
Financial Services	Food and Beverage
Health Service and Pharmaceutical	Hospitality
Insurance	Manufacturing
Metals and Mining	Paper and Forest Products
Publishing	Real Estate/Construction
Retailing	Telecommunications
Transportation	Travel
Utilities	

technology research and development, scientific research and development, sugar, food chain stores, domestic automobile production, and foreign automobile production. But of the 22 companies that responded, 20 had no incentive program whatsoever.

Although most of the companies polled had no specific incentive program, one of two recurring responses was that some companies offered compensation in the form of a superior performance award program or bonus. That is, employees who found valuable recruits for the company were recognized for

their efforts in the form of a performance award but not in a specific incentive award. The other recurring response was that executive search firms or headhunter agencies were used and were paid their customary fees. But overall, the 20 companies that responded to the questionnaire had no specific incentive program for their recruiters.

Two of the companies, however, did mention some form of an incentive program for their recruiters. One of the companies operated its incentive program under an employee referral system. It paid a recruitment bonus in the form of a $1,000 U.S. Savings Bond to those employees who recruited full-time personnel (as opposed to part-time).

The other company operated on a point system. This company, which will be called company "X" for anonymity, awarded points which could be accumulated and redeemed for valuable prizes. Every sales agent had the opportunity to cash in his or her points from a selection of 261 gift awards from an awards catalog. Those agents, however, who reached a higher level of sales, could choose from another awards catalog consisting of an additional 491 gift offerings. Such gifts were stereo systems, outdoor recreational equipment, computer systems, video camera equipment, luggage, china, and childrens' toys. This point system operated in three different aspects: total sales, sales increase, and recruiting.

Under the total sales aspect, employees earned a certain number of points as their total sales, measured over a one

year period, increased. Points were earned for each $500 increment in sales and were awarded by category as described in Table VII.

Table VII. POINT DISTRIBUTION FOR EVERY $500 IN SALES FOR COMPANY X.

Points awarded	Category
1	Up to $8,500
3	$8,501 to $20,000
5	$20,001 to $40,000
7	$40,000 to $60,000
10	$60,001 and up

The second aspect of the incentive program depended on the amount that sales increased over the previous year. That is, for each $500 increase over the previous year, points were awarded as shown in Table VIII.

The third aspect of the point system involved recruiting. For each successful recommendation, an employee would earn a certain number of points. The points were awarded as shown in Table IX. The employee also had the option of choosing a $20 check for each successful recommendation.

One of the companies polled -- a defense contractor -- offered a reason for not having an incentive plan -- the company does not need one in the present economic conditions.

Table VIII. POINTS EARNED FOR EACH $500 INCREASE OVER PREVIOUS YEAR FOR COMPANY X.

Total sales for present year	Points earned for each $500 increase over previous year
$1 to $8,500	5
$8,501 to $20,000	15
$20,000 to $40,000	25
$40,001 to $60,000	35
$60,001 to $80,000	45
$80,000 and over	50

Table IX. NUMBER OF POINTS EARNED FOR RECRUITING FOR COMPANY X.

Number of successful recommendations	Points earned
1	20 + 10 Bonus
2 through 5	20 each
6 through 10	25 each
11 and over	30 each

This particular company stated:

> Unlike the U.S. military, we invariably find ourselves with a surplus of potential employees. As such, we can be far more selective of those to whom we offer employment and do not necessarily need to spend much time recruiting qualified people.

This response may be an underlying reason why most companies do not have an incentive program. Most companies have potential employees "knocking on their door" whereas the Navy must usually "knock on" a potential recruit's door.

Nevertheless, just as information on incentives for recruiters is scarce, so is information on incentive programs.

Although the research for this thesis has discovered that incentive programs for recruiters are not nearly as popular as initially thought, the research has nevertheless discovered a unique incentive program in the real estate world.

One may be initially inclined to think that there are no recruiters in the real estate industry. If one thinks of realtors as recruiters of buyers and sellers of real estate, however, then in essence, realtors are recruiters. And one company in the real estate world is using the paradigm of sales commission in a new way.

Real Estate Maximum, more commonly known as RE/Max (pronounced REEMAX), uses an alternative approach to incentivize their realtors. Instead of splitting a traditional six percent sales commission with possibly another realtor and their own realtors, RE/Max allows their realtors to keep 100% of the sales commission but only after meeting a fee for use of the franchise. The fee ranges on average from $18,000 to $25,000 per year [Ref. 15, p. A1] which is paid by the realtor on a monthly basis. This equates to $1,500 to about $2,100 per month. So as long as the realtor can meet the monthly fee plus any office and related expenses, then any sales commission after the monthly fee and expenses belongs solely to the realtor.

Thus, in essence, there are two incentives here. The first incentive is to work hard enough to meet the monthly fees and related expenses. This is in contrast to the traditional method of other real estate firms where the company usually pays for office and related expenses but also takes up to 50% of the sales commission depending on sales volume. For example, two real estate companies usually split a six percent sales commission upon the sale of a house. This, of course, means that each company gets three percent. Then each company in turn splits the three percent with their agent. That is, each agent winds up with 1.5 percent sales commission. But as the agent's sales volume goes up, the agent will usually get to keep a little more than 1.5 percent of the sales commission. But in the traditional sense, the agent never gets to keep all of the sales commission, whereas, working under the RE/Max system, although there is pressure to meet a minimum amount, once the minimum amount has been met, then all future sales commissions belong solely to the realtor. This system may be especially enticing to a successful real estate agent.

The second incentive is sole possession of the sales commission. Once the minimum monthly expenses have been met, then 100% of a sales commission can mean a large sum of money. So those agents who feel they can easily meet a cost of $1,500 to $2,100 per month plus related expenses may want to use the RE/Max incentive program.

IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this thesis was to study the different types of incentive programs for recruiters that are used in the private sector of the U.S. economy and to examine how, if possible, incentives that are used for civilian recruiters can be applied to U.S. Navy recruiters.

But quite the opposite has been discovered. Probably the single most surprising discovery of this research is the scarcity of incentive programs for recruiters in the private sector of the U.S. economy. In addition to this discovery, four themes have evolved from this research: 1) the manner in which the term "recruiter" is defined, 2) potential recruiters, 3), referral systems for recruiters and 4) the Navy is a potential role model, if not a leader, of incentive programs for recruiters. These four themes are explained below.

A. LESSONS FOR THE NAVY

Although the Navy can be considered a role model of incentive programs for recruiters, the Navy may be able to further strengthen its recruiting force by broadening its definition of the term "recruiter." The literature review in chapter II showed how a broadened definition of recruiter led to some innovative ideas of who recruiters could be. Paper

carriers could be looked at as recruiters of customers; beauty consultants at Mary Kay also acted as recruiters; the computer industry used employee referral programs to encourage their DPs to act as recruiters. Chapter III looked at real estate agents as recruiters of buyers and sellers of real estate.

So by expanding the definition of recruiter, the second theme may be considered. Any employee or member of an organization may become a potential recruiter. And in the case of the Navy, instead of looking at its recruiters as only those who are specifically assigned to the recruiting force, the Navy could look at each one of its members as a potential recruiter.

This introduces the third theme mentioned above. When the computer industry used their DPs as recruiters, they also used employee referral plans to incentivize their new recruiters. Maybe, then, the Navy could set up a referral incentive or system to those members whose referral winds up with a successful recruit. This, in turn, leads to a potential topic for further research -- a referral system for the Navy.

The final theme that can be drawn from this research is that the Navy is a potential role model, if not a leader, of incentive programs for recruiters (and not vice versa as initially thought). Part of the purpose of this thesis was to examine how, if possible, the incentive systems used for recruiters in the private sector could be applied to the U.S.

Navy. But because of the scarcity of incentive systems in the private sector, it may be the private sector companies, that have a need for incentive programs for their recruiters, that may benefit from studying those incentive systems of the Navy or the other branches of the armed services. Ironically, further research that may be beneficial, then, is how to adapt and apply Navy incentives to the private sector.

Two more significant points can be drawn from this research. The first was made earlier in the literature review. In the newspaper industry, Arther J. Condliffe of the circulation department for *The Globe and Mail* warned about using an incentive too much for paper carriers. "If you do the same thing too many times the kids tire of it, the key to this thing is variety." Although the Navy's recruiting force is constantly turning over, i.e., a recruiter's term last two to three years before he or she moves on to a new assignment, and may not get tired of the incentives, it is an important point to consider. Further research in the area of varying incentive programs for the Navy may be another possible research topic.

The other point brought out in this research was that of Company X's incentive plans for sales and recruits. Further inspection of Tables VII, VIII, and IX reveals that for each marginal sale or recruit, the points awarded always increased. This seems to reflect that the next sale or recruit is more difficult than the last. So the company was varying awards to

compensate for the additional difficulty. For example, looking at Table VIII, after the fifth recruit, 25 points are awarded instead of 20, (the number of points awarded for the first five recruits). This suggests, as seems plausible, that the supply of recruits is upward-sloping; that is, recruits are harder and harder to get, so that recruiters must get increasing compensation for each additional recruit.

B. A LESSON FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR

As has already been discussed, the Navy or military is a role model, if not a leader, of incentive programs. Incentive plans for recruiters in the private sector are limited at best. Those companies that require an incentive plan for their recruiters may benefit most by examining the incentive mechanisms already in place in the Navy or armed services. Researchers, though, would have to find ways in which to adapt and apply incentives for Navy recruiters to recruiters in the private sector.

APPENDIX A. DEFINITION OF U.S. NAVY RATES

GROUP I: DECK

BM . . . . . Boatswain's Mate

EW . . . . . Electronics Warfare Technician

OS . . . . . Operations Specialist

OT . . . . . Ocean Systems Technician

OS . . . . . Operations Specialist

QM . . . . . Quartermaster

ST . . . . . Sonar Technician

SM . . . . . Signalman

GROUP II: ORDNANCE

FT . . . . . Fire Control Technician

GM . . . . . Gunner's Mate

MN . . . . . Mineman

MT . . . . . Missile Technician

TM . . . . . Torpedoman's Mate

GROUP III: ELECTRONICS

DS . . . . . Data Systems Technician

ET . . . . . Electronics Technician

GROUP IV: PRECISION EQUIPMENT

IM . . . . . Instrumentman

GROUP V: ADMINISTRATIVE AND CLERICAL

CT . . . . . Cryptologic Technician

DP . . . . . Data Processing Technician (DP)

DK . . . . . Disbursing Clerk

JO . . . . . Journalist

MS . . . . . Mess Management Specialist

NC . . . . . Navy Counselor

PN . . . . . Personnelman

PC . . . . . Postal Clerk

RM . . . . . Radioman

SH . . . . . Ship's Serviceman

SK . . . . . Storekeeper

YN . . . . . Yeoman

GROUP VI: MISCELLANEOUS

DM . . . . . Illustrator-Draftsman

LI . . . . . Lithographer

GROUP VII: ENGINEERING AND HULL

BT . . . . . Boiler Technician

EM . . . . . Electrician's Mate

EN . . . . . Engineman

HT . . . . . Hull Maintenance Technician

IC . . . . . Interior Communications Electrician

MM . . . . . Machinist's Mate

MR . . . . . Machinery Repairman

GROUP VIII: CONSTRUCTION

BU . . . . . Builder

CE . . . . . Construction Electrician

EA . . . . . Engineering Aide

UT . . . . . Utilitiesman

GROUP IX: AVIATION

AB . . . . . Aviation Boatswain's Mate

AD . . . . . Aviation Machinist's Mate

AE . . . . . Aviation Electrician's Mate

AK . . . . . Aviation Storekeeper

AM . . . . . Aviation Structural Mechanic

AO . . . . . Aviation Ordnanceman

AQ . . . . . Aviation Fire Control Technician

AS . . . . . Aviation Support Equipment Technician

AT . . . . . Aviation Electronics Technician

AW . . . . . Aviation Antisubmarine Warfare Operator

AZ . . . . . Aviation Maintenance Administration

PR . . . . . Aircrew Survival Equipmentman

GROUP X: MEDICAL

HM . . . . . Hospital Corpsman

Source: The Bluejacket's Manual [Ref. 16]

APPENDIX B. QUESTIONNAIRE

Mark L. Skidmore
LT USN
SMC 2840
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, California
93940

To the President,

My name is LT Mark L. Skidmore and I am a thesis student at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. I am conducting thesis research in the area of incentives for recruiters.

If you have any type of written documentation of your incentive programs for your recruiters, will you please send it to me.

Unless you instruct otherwise, I will keep your responses confidential.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mark L. Skidmore
LT USN

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